

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-07
SP-02 SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 PA-01 /129 W
-----072852 050304Z /73

P R 050229Z JUN 78

FM AMCONSUL MEDAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 869

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDAN 0181

E.O. 11652: GSP

TAGS: ENRG, ID

SUBJECT: BLOWOUT AT ARUN LNG PROJECT

1. MOBIL/PERMATIMA WILL BE ISSUING A PRESS RELEASE JUNE 5 ANNOUNCING THAT A WELLHEAD BLEW OUT AT 0514 ON JUNE 4 AT THE LHOK SEUKON GAS FIELD IN ACEH PROVINCE OF NORTHERN SUMATRA. THIS GAS FIELD IS PART OF THE ARUN LIQUID NATURAL GAS/CONDENSATE PROJECT UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND SCHEDULED FOR A FULL OFFICIAL OPENING AUGUST 1. NO INJURIES OCCURED. FULL EMERGENCY MEASURES ARE IN EFFECT.
2. ABOVE PARAGRAPH IS PUBLIC INFORMATION BUT FOLLOWING DETAILS ARE FYI ONLY. MOBIL OFFICIALS HERE ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT THIS EMERGENCY, WHICH ONE MOBIL OFFICIAL CHARACTERIZED AS THE BIGGEST MOBIL HAS EVER HAD. THEY ASK THAT THESE DETAILS BE HANDLED FOR THE TIME BEING IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, WITH OFFICIAL MOBIL INFORMATION COMING FROM THEIR PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER, GIL BLOUNT, IN JAKARTA.
3. BLOWOUT OCCURRED IN A WELL THAT WAS BEING DRILLED IN CLUSTER TWO AT LHOK SEUKON GAS FIELD; DRILLERS, WHILE ATTEMPTING TO DISLodge SOME STUCK DRILLING PIPE, HAD AN EXTRA SURGE OF PRESSURE WHICH COULD

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NOT BE CONTROLLED. POSSIBLY FROM METAL SPARKS WHEN BLOWN OUT PIPE HIT DRILLING RIG, THE GAS CAUGHT FIRE SHORTLY AFTER THE BLOWOUT. THE PRESSURES ESCAPING HAVE INCREASED OVER THE LAST 24 HOURS. ENGINEERS AT SITE DO NOT AGREE ON HOW MUCH IS ESCAPING BUT THE BEST ESTIMATE IS 400 MILLION CUBIC FEET A DAY. (NOTE: THIS GAS FIELD HAS MUCH HIGHER THAN NORMAL PRESSURES AND TEMPERATURES FOR WHICH SPECIAL EQUIPMENT HAS HAD TO BE DESIGNED; THE PRESSURE IS 7200 LBS

PER SQUARE INCH AS COMPARED TO USUAL 4800 LBS PSI IN A GAS FIELD.)

4. THE WELL KNOWN BLOWOUT EXPERT, RED ADAIR, WILL ARRIVE AT THE FIELD JUNE 6. MOBIL HOPES HE WILL HAVE SOME GOOD IDEAS FOR CONTROLLING THE BLOWOUT BECAUSE AT THE PRESENT TIME NO ONE KNOWS QUITE HOW IT WILL BE CONTAINED. DYNAMITE CANNOT BE USED BECAUSE OF THE FIRE. DIAGONAL DRILLING INTO THE FORMATION TO PACK IN MUD AND STOP THE BLOWOUT IS ONE POSSIBILITY BUT THIS, OF COURSE, WOULD TAKE WEEKS.

5. MOBIL OFFICIALS HERE HAVE NOT YET ADDRESSED IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS OF THE ARUN LNG PROJECT BUT ADMIT THAT IT MIGHT RESULT IN SOME DELAYING EFFECT FOR THE AUGUST 1 TARGET OPENING DATE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATURAL GAS, FIRES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MEDAN00181
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780233-1077
Format: TEL
From: MEDAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780696/aaaadeui.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 19893d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2491126
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BLOWOUT AT ARUN LNG PROJECT
TAGS: ENRG, ID, MOBIL OIL CO
To: STATE JAKARTA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/19893d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014